

June 16, 2005

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Miami Community Leaders and Top Federal Health Officials Join Forces to Raise Awareness on Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage

WHO: **Mike Leavitt**, Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Josefina Carbonell, Assistant Secretary, U.S. Administration on Aging

WHAT: The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services will join local Miami officials and representatives to spotlight community-based resources that will help educate and enroll seniors and disabled beneficiaries in the new Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage.

WHEN: June 20, 2005 at 10:15 AM
Note: Media should arrive by 10:00 AM

WHERE: Little Havana Activities and Nutrition Center
700 SW 8th St.
Miami, FL 33130
305-858-0887

BACKGROUND: Beginning January 1, 2006, prescription drug coverage will be available to all Americans with Medicare. Every person with Medicare – no matter how they get their health care today or whether they have existing drug coverage – will be eligible for drug coverage under a Medicare prescription drug plan. The drug plans will be available in all parts of the country, and they will cover brand name and generic drugs. Prescriptions can be obtained from neighborhood pharmacies and through mail order.

All Medicare beneficiaries will have a choice of plans, so they can get the coverage that best meets their needs. They will need to make a decision soon about signing up for Medicare's new prescription drug coverage – and President Bush has launched a nationwide outreach effort to help them to make an informed decision. Enrollment begins November 15, 2005. Coverage begins January 1, 2006.